

Virginia GED Success Stories



2007-2008

Take Charge. Get Your GED.

IN 1964, AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN, Sonny Alicie left high school, quit his job, and moved to Tazewell, Virginia to take care of his sick grandfather. Two years later, after his grandfather's death, Sonny wanted to join the Army and become a helicopter pilot; but he was told he needed

his high school credential to qualify. Sonny studied for his GED on Saturdays while he worked as a crew chief for the Army during the week. At 18, after just 4 weeks of study, he earned his GED and then served in Vietnam

for nineteen months. Today, Sonny is Captain and Director of Classification and Treatment Services at the Prince William-Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center and written four articles for his professional organization's magazine.

**A Success Story
from Manassas, Virginia**



Captain Sonny Alicie is:

- ☐ Certified jail manager
- ☐ Vietnam veteran
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☐ Published author
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

700,000 working-age Virginians, 18 to 64 years of age, do not have a high school diploma. Of those, 500,000 have the potential to earn their GEDs within 60 to 180 days.

August 2007

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

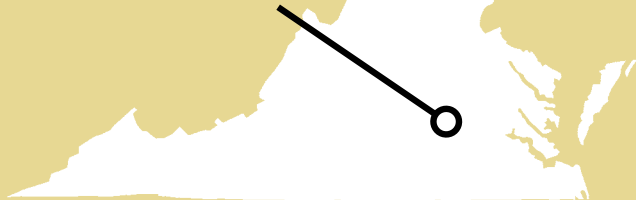
<i>“Lamar Advertising is proud to contribute our advertising resources to such a worthwhile project, the Race to GED. We are especially pleased with the number of people who have responded to our billboards, completed the program, and received their GED.”</i> – Steve Southern, Lamar Outdoor Advertising				1	2	3	4
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You Can Do It Too! And We Can Help.
1-877-37-MY-GED • www.vaged.vcu.edu

Change Your Life. Get Your GED.

DALE WILSON left high school lacking only one credit. He thought he could make it without a diploma. After twenty years in the carpentry business, Dale decided to expand his opportunities and

A Success Story from Chesterfield County, Virginia



obtained his GED. He is now the carpentry instructor for Chesterfield Technical Center. He plans to obtain a bachelor's degree. His wife, Amber, after struggling to finish the last few credits

needed for her diploma and then being told she still needed a few more classes, left school discouraged. With the encouragement of her mother, a GED success story who went onto college, Amber took the test, passed it, and now she works for Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists. She is determined to continue her education in order to become a cardiac technician.

Did You Know?

In five years, 70% of job openings will require a technical skills certificate. Workers can't get such a certificate without a high school diploma or a GED.



Dale and Amber Wilson are:

- ☐ Mother and father of two
- ☐ Teacher and caregiver
- ☐ College bound
- ☐ GED graduates
- ☒ All of the Above

September 2007

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

<i>“Charter Media has felt it a privilege to have been a part of the Race to GED over the past three years. Seeing the lives of others changed by the Race to GED program makes working with it a rewarding experience.”</i> <div>– Jeff Fritz, Charter Media</div>						1
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Go to College. Get Your GED.

THE THIRTY YEARS IT TOOK Helen Booze to go back to school and get her GED were a long, hard struggle, but for Helen, it was worth it all in the end. She dropped out of school after her ninth grade year

A Success Story from Halifax, Virginia



to get married and start a family. She loved school and told herself she would get her GED one day, but a growing family and a job kept her occupied. Finally, with her kids grown, and

motivated by their encouragement, Helen signed up for GED classes at the Halifax Career Center. In 2005, she received her GED credential. Currently, she is enrolled in her local community college and will be taking classes in computer technology. She plans eventually to earn a bachelor's degree.



Helen Booze is:

- ☐ Former factory worker
- ☐ School division employee
- ☐ College student
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

Ninety-five percent of colleges and universities in the United States accept the GED in their admission application.

October 2007

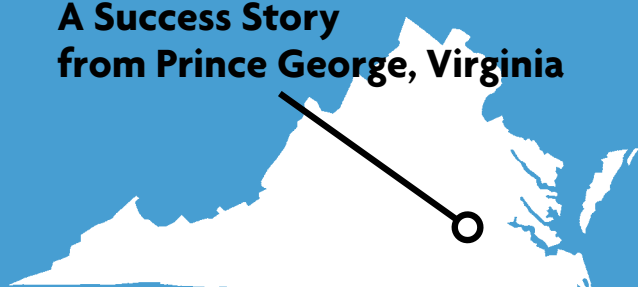
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28	29	30	31	<i>“Everyone wins in the Race to GED! The business community prospers from a better-educated workforce, individual and family income increases, and GED graduates are better prepared for future challenges in the workplace.”</i> – Fred Scaggs, Virginia Employment Commission, Prince William Field Office		

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It's Never Too Late. Get Your GED.

BORN IN 1942 AND RAISED ON A TOBACCO FARM in Halifax County, Cecil Peade left school after the sixth grade and worked with his family of sharecroppers. Later, working for a tobacco company in Petersburg,

A Success Story from Prince George, Virginia



he realized that his lack of education was holding him back, so he decided to take a math course to help him with his job. He held various jobs as an adult and eventually, using the experience he had gained,

he started his own glass business. The success of this business wasn't enough for Cecil. In 2004, at the age of 62, he read a sign in the Hopewell Library about getting the GED. Cecil obtained his GED in 2005.



Cecil Peade is:

- ☐ Former sharecropper
- ☐ Grandfather
- ☐ Small business owner
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

In 40 of the 134 localities in Virginia, more than 30 percent of adults do not have a GED or diploma. The overall education level of a workforce is a critical factor in attracting new businesses and jobs.

November 2007

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"We were happy to work with the Race to GED campaign to expand their message statewide. Clear Channel supports education and the GED campaign. We look forward to working with the Race to GED in the future."

– Dave Bandas, Clear Channel Communications

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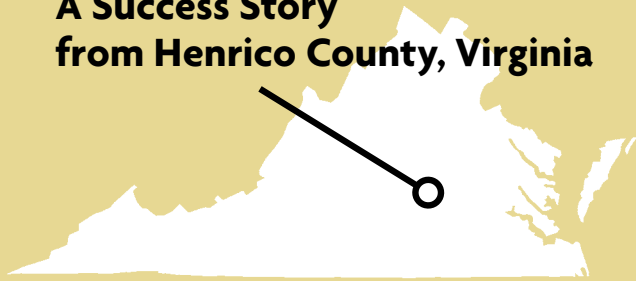
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Aim Higher. Get Your GED.

MELISSA TIMBERLAKE WAS HOME SCHOOLED in high school and did not receive a traditional diploma. However, she earned her GED in 1994 and enrolled in community college. After transferring to

A Success Story from Henrico County, Virginia



Mary Washington College, she earned bachelor's degrees in both business and psychology in 1998. While pursuing a successful career in real estate, Melissa began taking flying lessons and realized

this was the life she loved. Today, she flies passenger airplanes for US Airways Express. Melissa says, "If you don't try, you will never know what you can do. Getting my GED was that bridge to everything I wanted to do."



Melissa Timberlake is:

- ☐ College graduate
- ☐ Real estate agent
- ☐ Airline pilot
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

Return on investment is high for both GED graduates and employers: Better-educated employees exhibit increased productivity and fewer job-related injuries.

December 2007

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

“We are proud to support Virginia’s GED program since it provides a second chance in life to those people who need it most. Adult education bridges the divide between a low paying job and a rewarding career. GED programs are also a tremendously efficient way to boost the economic competitiveness of a region.”

– John W. Forbes, Literary Foundation of Virginia

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Prove it to Yourself. Get Your GED.

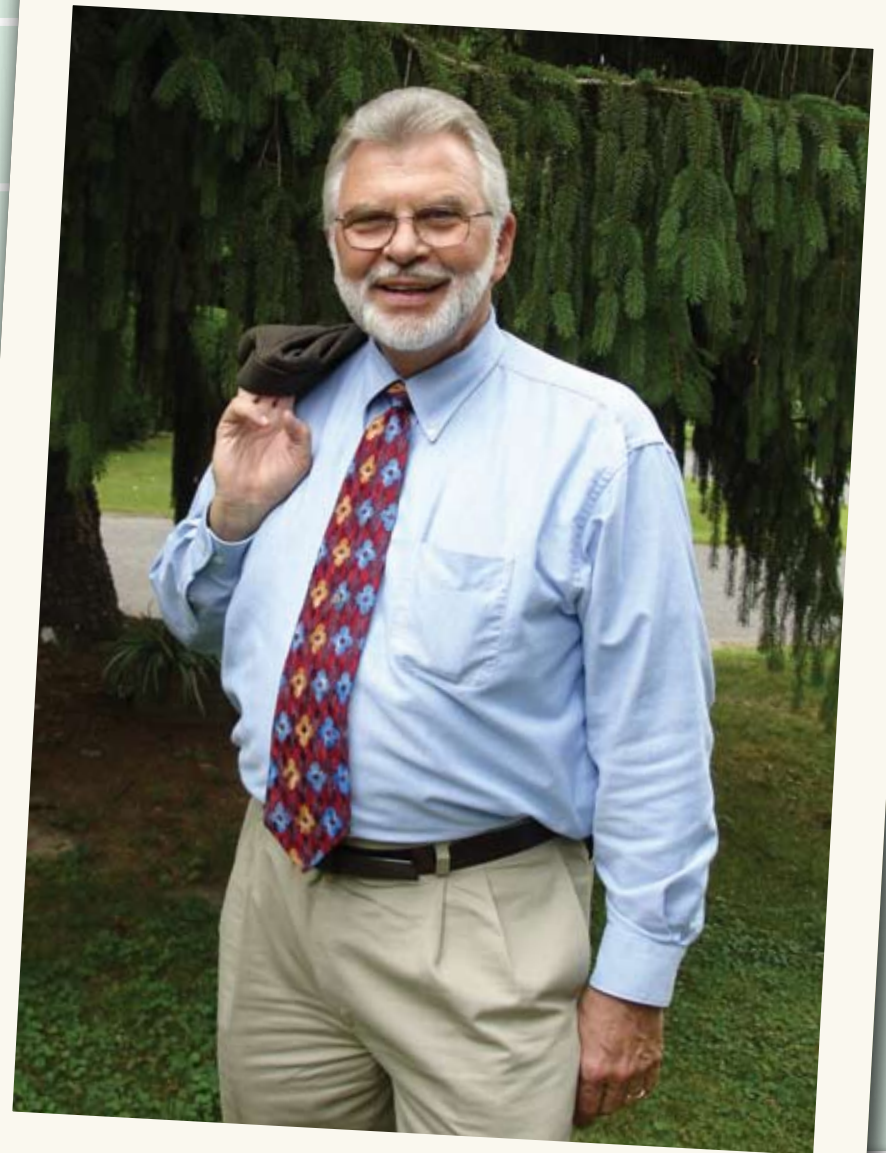
RONNIE MUTTER'S HEARING IMPAIRMENT MADE LEARNING DIFFICULT IN SCHOOL. With the ability to process only about 20 percent of sounds and without access to a hearing aid, Ronnie left

high school his freshman year feeling like he wasn't smart enough to succeed. A few years later, he learned that with work and dedication, he could do anything he wanted, including become a minister.

A Success Story from Big Stone Gap, Virginia



Now in his mid-60s, Ronnie is a Methodist minister in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. His church offers a weekly GED class because Ronnie wants to encourage and support others who may be in the same position he was in many years ago.



Ronnie Mutter is:

- ☐ College graduate
- ☐ Hearing impaired
- ☐ Ordained minister
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

You can prepare to take the GED tests by taking the Official Practice Test, enrolling in GED preparation classes offered through local adult education programs, studying at home by purchasing GED study guides or checking them out from libraries, using online programs, or watching the *GED Connection* program on local PBS stations.

January 2008

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<i>“Do not make the assumption your employees are not interested because they have not already pursued getting their GED. The excitement and commitment from our employee base is overwhelming. An opportunity is all they needed.”</i> – Andrea Witt, Human Resources Director, City of Danville		1	2	3	4	5
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Pursue Your Dreams. Get Your GED.

JOYCE COOKE LEFT HIGH SCHOOL in the tenth grade. At the age of 20, determined to give herself more opportunities, Joyce earned her GED and soon after landed a job with Newport News Public School

A Success Story from Newport News, Virginia



system. While working there as a teacher's assistant, she was encouraged by her co-workers to further pursue her education. While working full-time, she earned an associate's degree. She went on to earn both a

bachelor's and a master's degree and now works as an attendance officer for the Newport News school system. As encouragement to others, Joyce quotes Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Did You Know?

GED graduates earn an average of \$7000 more per year than those without a high school diploma or GED.



Joyce Cooke is:

- ☐ College graduate
- ☐ School attendance officer
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

February 2008

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

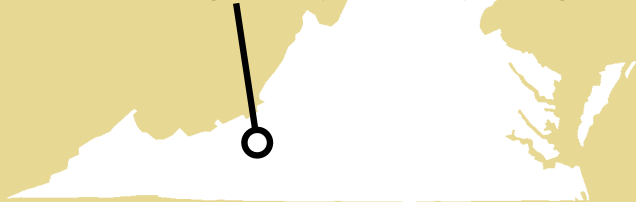
<i>“d-Scan strongly supports the GED program. Currently, the company has one of the mobile labs on site to help promote the GED program to our employees. Thirty percent of d-Scan’s workforce does not have a high school education. We currently have seven students enrolled and two have successfully completed the program. The two graduates received a \$.50 per hour increase for completing their GED.”</i> – Earl Cindea, d-SCAN, Inc.						1	2
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Make it a Family Affair. Get Your GED.

GROWING UP IN A FAMILY OF TWELVE, Phyllis Harris, like many of her siblings, needed to leave school and earn a living. She did this at sixteen, and worked in factories and retail for

**A Success Story
from Montgomery County, Virginia**



many years. Later, spurred on by an older sister, five of Phyllis's family members earned GEDs, and Phyllis soon followed suit. Today, she is proud to be one

of eight members of her family who hold a GED and proud to be the "Pony Lady," or mail clerk, for Montgomery County Public Schools.



Phyllis Harris is:

- ☐ "Pony Lady"
- ☐ Former factory worker
- ☐ Congressional honoree
- ☐ One of eight GED graduates in her family
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

GED graduates rely less upon social service subsidies than those without a GED.

March 2008

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

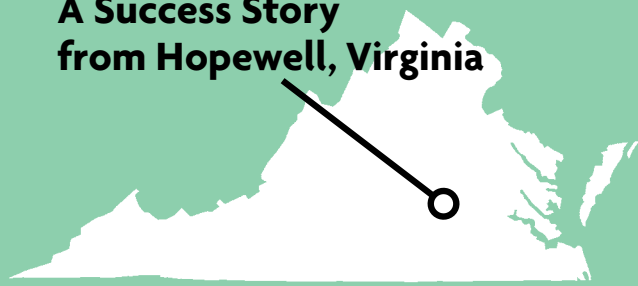
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Build a Strong Foundation. Get Your GED.

DURING HIS FRESHMAN YEAR, Andre Bright was expelled from high school. Three years later, feeling unable to move forward in his life, he enrolled in an adult education program in Hopewell and received his

A Success Story from Hopewell, Virginia



GED in 2005. Now nineteen, he works with a cleaning contractor, is working towards his driver's license, and has plans to go to community college. He also volunteers his time as a GED tutor. Andre says

"I can't go back to high school, but I can inspire students and adults to move forward with their education."

Did You Know?

The GED Fast Track uses specialized instruction that focuses each individual on what he/she need to learn to pass the GED tests in 90 days or less. The pass rate for GED Fast Track students is 90%.



Andre Bright is:

- ☐ Tutor
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☐ College student
- ☐ Motivator
- ☒ All of the above

April 2008

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

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27	28	29	30	<p><i>“The bottom line is that a better educated workforce will attract better employers offering higher paying jobs. I feel so strongly about this program because I know that it will improve people’s lives, Virginia’s economy, and the future of the commonwealth.”</i></p> <p>– Mark Warner, Former Governor of Virginia</p>		

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Create Opportunities. Get Your GED.

MARY WHITE BEGAN HER ACADEMIC CAREER OVERSEAS, but when she returned to the States, she found her class work redundant and boring. Mary stopped attending high school in her sophomore year.

**A Success Story
from Fairfax, Virginia**

When she considered joining the military, she was informed that she would need a high school diploma or GED. She passed her GED and joined the Air Force. Later she graduated summa cum laude with

a bachelor of arts from Mary Washington College and then went on to receive her law degree from George Mason School of Law. Today, she practices family law with a law firm in Fairfax, Virginia and is particularly interested in pro bono work.



Mary White is:

- ☐ Former member of U.S. Air Force
- ☐ College graduate with honors
- ☐ Lawyer
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

The cost to the state for each GED graduate is about \$350, proof that the Race to GED is an efficient and cost effective program.

May 2008

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

<i>“One of the most rewarding marketing milestones in my 30+ year career is our involvement with Virginia’s Race to GED adult education campaign. I am extremely proud to be a part of this effort.”</i> – Ray Walker, Charter Media				1	2	3
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Keep Growing. Get Your GED.

JEANNE MARTIN CISSE PRESIDED OVER THE UNITED NATIONS' SECURITY COUNCIL, chaired the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, served as ambassador from her native Guinea to the govern-

ments of Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela, speaks five languages, became an American citizen, and has traveled in 50 countries. Approaching 80 years old, however, she wanted to reach another goal: to speak, read,

and write English well enough to earn her GED. She enrolled at the Alexandria Adult Learning Center in 1999 and received her GED certificate by her 80th birthday. Continuing with her English-language classes, Cisse hopes to use her expertise in helping teenaged scholars gain insight into international affairs and the importance of freedom and human rights. In the summer of 2006, Cisse received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the GED Testing Service.

**A Success Story
from Alexandria, Virginia**



Jeanne Martin Cisse is:

- ☐ Former Chair of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid
- ☐ American citizen
- ☐ Former Ambassador from Guinea
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

Did You Know?

Adults who can't read are hospitalized at twice the rate as those with better reading skills. Forty-three percent of those Americans at the lowest literacy level live in poverty. Sixty percent of prison inmates are illiterate.

June 2008

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29	30	31	<p><i>“Thanks to the Race to GED, HeadStart parents have increased self-esteem and are empowered to become stronger advocates for their children. They are able to help their children see the importance of literacy in their everyday lives and encourage them to stay in school. ”</i></p> <p>– Kelly Bledsoe, Scott County HeadStart</p>			

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Set an Example. Get Your GED.

IN 1993, María Negrón found herself embarking on a new life as a single mother of three. Without a high school diploma, she knew she needed to get an education in order to offer her children a better life. So, she

A Success Story from Richmond, Virginia



began inquiring about the process of getting her GED. María had been out of school for ten years, but despite her hesitancy, she took the test and six weeks later received a letter of congratulations for

passing her GED exam. She went on to obtain a bachelor's degree and today she teaches Spanish to high school students. She also works in the evening with the adult ESOL program at the Adult Career Development Center in Richmond, Virginia.

Did You Know?

Earning a GED helps parents break the cycle of generational illiteracy; parents who value education enough to study for a GED influence their children to take education seriously.



María Negrón is:

- ☐ Single parent
- ☐ Spanish teacher
- ☐ Literacy volunteer
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

July 2008

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Give Back. Get Your GED.

JOHN FLOYD WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN IDEAS AND LEARNING, but as a high school student he didn't believe that school could meet those needs, so he dropped out and got a job and a new Ford. However,

A Success Story from Northampton, Virginia



he had always been fascinated with radio and electronics. So at 17, when he saw a class offered in electronic communications and realized it required a high school diploma or GED, he was motivated to go back

to school. Today, John has been teaching electronics at Eastern Shore Community College for 15 years in the very same room where he took his first college class in 1979. He also teaches as adjunct faculty for the University of Maryland. As a teacher, he tries to be a coach and mentor to students, like himself, who did not follow the traditional academic path.



Did You Know?

GED graduates perform as well as traditional high school graduates in technical skills training, community college, and four-year college.

John Floyd is:

- ☐ Former factory worker
- ☐ College instructor
- ☐ Master's degree candidate
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

August 2008

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

<i>“Supporting the Race to GED was an easy decision for Alcoa. The program raises the standards of the workforce to provide the quality employee needed to compete in a global market.”</i> – Earl H. Robbins, Jr., Alcoa						1	2
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Make a Difference. Get Your GED.

AFTER HER JUNIOR YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL, Judith Lacks dropped out to avoid repeating the eleventh grade. After working in the textile

A Success Story from Halifax, Virginia



industry for over 20 years, Judith became a displaced worker. The Volunteer Literacy Program coordinator in Halifax convinced her to work towards her GED. Today, Judith is pursuing her associate's degree

in Arts and Science and wants to become an interpreter for the local school division's hearing-impaired students. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the International Honor Society of the two-year college.



Did You Know?

More than 95% of U.S. employers recognize the GED with regard to hiring, salary, and opportunity for advancement. Promoting GED graduates from within is a way employers can maintain a stable, competitive workforce.

Judith Lacks is:

- ☐ Former textile worker
- ☐ College student
- ☐ Member of Phi Theta Kappa
- ☐ Parent volunteer
- ☒ All of the above

September 2008

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28	29	30	<p><i>“Continuing the partnership between HeadStart and our local adult education program is crucial so we can continue to provide follow-up with families to help identify potential obstacles that may prevent them from completing their individual adult education program.”</i></p> <p>– Kelly Bledsoe, Scott County HeadStart</p>			

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Open Doors. Get Your GED.

PETER SANTEN is a high school math and social studies teacher who holds a master's degree in political science. He is also a high school drop-out and a GED graduate. As a teenager, he attended four high

**A Success Story
from Charlottesville, Virginia**



schools in four years and was in the eleventh grade when he made the decision to leave school. While working various jobs from dishwasher to cabinet maker, he realized returning to school would

give him more choices. Today, Peter's most rewarding job is being a GED instructor, helping others overcome some of the same difficulties he experienced twenty years ago.

Did You Know?

In addition to competency in math, science, reading, writing, and social studies, the GED tests measure communication, information processing, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.



Peter Santen is:

- ☐ High school math and social studies teacher
- ☐ GED instructor
- ☐ Master's degree recipient
- ☐ GED graduate
- ☒ All of the above

October 2008

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

<i>"I embraced the idea of the City of Danville being the pilot program for Governor Mark Warner's initiative called Race to GED. Our vision is to have a 100% educated workforce and encourage other businesses and organizations to do the same. This initiative takes a solid commitment from the top, involvement and commitment of the departments, and flexibility with program decisions."</i> — Andrea Witt, Human Resources Director, City of Danville				1	2	3	4
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**Get Your
GED**

“The Race to GED marked a significant change in adult education in Virginia. Increased outreach and marketing raised public and governmental awareness of the GED’s benefits. Changes in our instructional approach through implementation of the Fast Track model quickly prepared adult learners to be successful on the GED test. Unprecedented partnerships with businesses throughout Virginia ensured that their employees were well prepared for advancement and technical training. The end results were thousands of lives changed for the better.”

– Elizabeth Hawa
Director, Office of Adult Education and Literacy



For more information about earning your GED or about Virginia’s Race to GED, please call 1-877-37-MY-GED or log on to the Race to GED website at www.vaged.vcu.edu.